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INTRODUCTION

Within the last fifty years an enormous amount of historical material has been published in our country, so enormous that the complete survey of any one field of research has become a problem. Bibliographies of specific topics are familiar devices for shortening labor, but their usefulness has limitations. Indexes of wide scope and ample detail seem the only practical solution of the problem. The great two-volume index of Virginia historical data is a forerunner of what must come if the historical phase of American culture is to develop to its fullest extent. As a beginning in this direction the lesser indexes, made to cover groups of published material, may serve well for a time. They are convenient for use and they obviate the need of using volume indexes which, in extensive work, consume the time and strain the patience of a searcher.

The Columbia Historical Society has faithfully served the District of Columbia by publishing a long series of papers revealing the past history of the Nation's Capital. Reminiscenses, biographies, reprints, genealogies, scheduled data, and analytical narrative jostle one another in some fifty volumes of the Society's proceedings. This ten-volume index is presented as a beginning effort to lessen the labors of those who delve in District history. It has its deficiencies probably, as most indexes have, and doubtless there are some unintended errors as well, but such as it is, the compiler offers it to those who search.

L. D. S.